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## ON CRIMINAL SUGGESTION.

A WIDELY known criminal trial has brought before thoughtful minds, on both sides of the water, this question, viz.: Whether a subject in a hypnotic condition possesses any free will, and whether in such a state, it is possible to transform him into a criminal or at least, for the time being into becoming an accomplice in crime! It is not the first time that this question has been agitated; indeed at the very beginning of Mesmerism, as it was then called, this idea was brought forward.

It was clearly formulated by Dr. Charpignon, whose own opinion nevertheless is, that it was "much easier to restore moral rectitude to a somnambulist who had fallen therefrom, than to pervert the integrity of character of a woman of high moral standing." In 1866 Dr. Liébeault, in his work on, "Sleep and Kindred States of Being," of which at that time there were but six copies sold, coincides entirely with this opinion. The passage is too noticeable, not to be quoted in its entirety. (P. 524.)

"We may postulate, as a first principle, that a subject during the state of magnetic sleep, is at the mercy of the hypnotiser. I have made experiments that have confirmed me in this opinion; I have many a time, removed the hats of such persons, searched their pockets, drawn off the rings from their fingers, untied their shoes, etc., . . . without their having noticed the action at all, or having made the least resistance, the isolation into which I had thrown them, being the cause of this absence of all consciousness. . . .

"How very grave, the possibilities, are which may ensue from this state of being, we may readily conceive! What I have advanced here, is the result of certain experiments which I made upon a young girl, who, while being very intelligent in her natural waking condition, became during hypnotic sleep the most cross-

grained and wilful person I had ever had to deal with. Nevertheless I always ended by mastering her will. I was able to excite in her mind the most criminal resolves ; I roused her passions to a high degree, I was able to cause her to fall into a violent rage with a person, to fly out upon her with a knife in her hand ; having displaced in her mind the sentiment of friendship, still armed with that instrument, I sent her to stab her best friend, whom I told her she saw in front of her ; she obeyed, the knife burying itself in the wall opposite. I almost prevailed upon another young girl, who was however less under the influence, to kill her own mother, and though she wept, she actually prepared to do the deed.

“After all, it has been known for a fact, that a man, who, up to that moment, was of sound mind, hearing a voice continually repeating : ‘Kill your wife. Kill your children’—has obeyed this command, incited thereto by an irresistible impulse ; and shall the hypnotic subject already predisposed to hallucination, escape this same involuntary impulse ? I am firmly convinced, after having made many other experiments, that a subject to whom is suggested the commission of any bad action, will carry out the crime after his awakening, by reason of what has now become in him a fixed idea. The most moral will become vitiated, the highest-minded perverted.

“If it has already been found possible to reform a woman of loose morals and bring her to abandon entirely her evil courses, why cannot the reverse be effected and by the same means ? It would be in the power of the magnetiser to suggest to his subject, not only to become a tale-bearer, a calumniator, a thief, dissolute, etc., at some period subsequent to the magnetic sleep, but, he might use him, for example, as the instrument of his personal vengeance and the poor dreamer, unmindful of the primary incitement to the criminal action, would commit on another’s account, instead of on his own, the evil deed, prompted and forced on thereto, by the irresistible suggestion and will, imposed upon him by another person. And when the crime shall have been consummated, where shall he find the medical jurist, who can hold up to Justice, the torch which is to throw the Light of Truth upon the act, and challenge the innocency of a man, who, up to the moment of the crime never exhibited the slightest sign of insanity, had shown every mark of a sound mind and yet, when convicted of the dreadful deed, states with every apparent sign of good faith, that he has committed it of his own accord ? And who can tell whether such cases have not already taken place.”

These momentous words passed unnoticed. At that time, the world did not believe in Hypnotism. M. M. Richot and Charcot restored it to a place of honor. The School of the Salpêtrière made its advent, and saw in Hypnotism a pathological condition. Simultaneously with this school of thought, there arose the rival one at Nancy, which following its leader, Dr. Liébeault, saw in hypno-

tism, only a psychological phenomenon. One of the masters in this school, M. Liégeois, Professor of the Faculty of Law, in 1884, in his pamphlet on "Hypnotic Suggestion, in relation to Civil and Criminal Law" also propounded to the public this idea of criminal suggestion.

M. Liégeois, like M. Liébeault, did not confine himself merely to theory. He went on to demonstrate and prove his thesis by conclusive experiments.

Strange to say, the Salpêtrière took issue on this point, adopting and defending the opposite opinion.

I would now ask permission to raise my own voice in this debate, and I am the more emboldened so to do, inasmuch as my own personal observations and the study which I have brought to bear on this matter, have caused me to pass, so to speak, from one rival camp to the other. The thesis upheld by the School at Nancy, while it found in me at first an adherent, finds me to-day an adversary.

Just a word about myself to the readers of *The Monist*.

I have always been a believer in Magnetism. At the outset, and until towards 1875, merely on the faith of books, later, because I had been present at one or two more or less public exhibitions. And it appears singular enough, that though thus imperfectly trained in the knowledge of it, I should have explained, as I did in 1869, the ecstasies and the stigmata of the celebrated Louise Lateau, as coming simply from auto-suggestion; and that even to-day, there should be neither jot nor tittle to subtract from what I then wrote, regarding it.

I only began practising magnetism at the commencement of 1886. I was returning from a visit to the Salpêtrière whither I had been attracted by my doubts on this very transference of thought and from which I returned with my doubts intensified. I have already recounted, in a series of articles, that appeared in less than a year in the *Revue Philosophique* ("Upon Memory in Hypnotic Subjects"; "On the influence of Imitation and Education in Somnambulism, as exhibited in the so-called hypnotic sleep"; etc.) my experiences, observations, and inductions. Not to speak of my contribu-

tions to the Magazines, and notably to the *Revue de l'Hypnotisme*, I introduced hypnotism into the science course of the Royal Academy of Belgium by means of two works. One, on the "Origin," the other on the "Extent of the Curative Effects of Hypnotism" (1887-1890). Besides many other polemical writings in favor of the liberty of holding public exhibitions ("Letters to M. Chiriar, Representative," 1888. "Magnetisers and Physicians," 1890). I related at length what M. Charcot and his pupils had shown me in Paris, as well as what M. M. Liébeault, Bernheim, and Liégeois, had let me witness at Nancy ("A Visit to the Salpêtrière," 1886—"A Visit to the School at Nancy," 1889).

At the time then, that I took upon myself to hypnotise, I firmly believed that the subject became the property of the magnetiser; passing over, as of no importance, the manifest resistances that I met with at every point and in every form on the part of subjects, who, in all other respects I found perfectly adapted to such experiments; as for instance, one who permitted his tongue to be pierced with a large darning needle by my sceptical colleague, Dr. Masius; and to be burned several times, both with a red hot iron and by thermocautery, by my colleague, the surgeon Von Winiwarter, both these experiments having reference to the curative effects of hypnotism. Thus, adhering entirely to the belief of M. M. Liébeault and Beaunis, at the close of 1886 ("A Visit to the Salpêtrière") I wrote these words:

"M. Beaunis's statement is perfectly exact. The somnambulist, in the hands of the hypnotiser, is less than the *corpse*, which the perfect disciple of Loyola should resemble. He is a slave, with no will other than that of his ruler, and in order to fulfil the commands laid upon him, he will push precaution, prudence, cunning, dissimulation and falsehood, to their extremest limits. He will open and shut doors noiselessly, walk in his stockings; will listen and watch, with what keen sight, what acute hearing! He will remember anything and everything you want him to, will forget all you desire him to forget. He will, in good faith, accuse a perfectly innocent man before a Court of Justice. He will have seen everything, that in reality he has never seen, if you command him so to do; he will have heard, what he never could have heard and done everything that he never could have done. He will swear by his Household Gods, that he has acted throughout, of his own free will, without any external pressure, will invent motives if need be, and will completely protect and cover his hypnotiser.

"Theoretically, such a power is the most dangerous thing on the face of the earth! I believe though, that practically, with the exception of what might relate to physical or moral abuses or tampering with testamentary wills, there is actually little or no danger. It appears to me the fear of this has been unduly exaggerated."

In a foot-note of mine, while mentioning with highest praise the memoir of M. Liégeois, I added further: "I do not express any alarm that I cannot show a good reason for." Among other reasons, I pondered on the difficulty, say rather, the impossibility there is, of obtaining from the subject an absolute abnegation of will-power, whilst at the same time we allow him to retain the necessary free will to cope with any unforeseen accidents which might occur to compromise the fulfilment of the thought and action suggested.

Two or three months later I should not have expressed myself thus; and hence the remarks that accompany the experiments related in my articles on Hypnotic Consciousness, *Revue Philosophique*, Feb., March, 1887, experiments which took place about a year previous to this (see the note to the contributed articles, Feb. 1887, p. 119). It may there be noticed that my assent is tempered by certain marked reservations. I was even then opposing practice to theory, i. e. I narrowed down these apprehensions of danger to two legitimate causes of alarm, viz. attempts against morals, and tampering with testamentary wills.

Upon these two points I am still of the same opinion, with this exception, that what I then feared probable, I now regard as exceedingly problematic. I mean to say, that a villain who was contemplating the perpetration of a crime, would not easily find an accomplice in a subject of good moral standing. And in any case, I still think as I thought then, that such an accomplice would not only be inapt, but compromising. It is this latter point, I wish to demonstrate to you, by the following criticism upon an experiment never before published.

At the end of May, of last year, I was passing through Nancy with some friends, among whom was Dr. L. Frédéricq, Professor of Physiology at the University of Liège. We were spending the evening at M. Beaunis's house together with M. M. Liébeault, Bernheim, and Liégeois. Naturally this question of Criminal Suggestion

came upon the *tapis* and was discussed in all its phases, without advancing one step towards its solution. We made an engagement to meet at the hospital on the following day, where M. Bernheim invited me to be present at an experiment, which he maintained would convince me. I will relate at length the occurrence, for in such cases, the slightest details may acquire very great importance.

M. Bernheim threw into the magnetic sleep a great, tall fellow, quite easily influenced, and whose illness did not prevent him from walking about in the ward.

“Presently, when you have waked up, you will go and steal an orange from the patient that you see over there, in that bed opposite. Remember that what you are going to do is very wrong ; it is strictly forbidden by honesty and by the law, and you will run the risk of being punished.” The man is waked. He appears to be collecting his thoughts. He rubs his forehead, he is visibly meditating something.

“What is the matter with you? What are you thinking about?” I ask him.

“Nothing.”

“You seem preoccupied.”

“Well, yes, I have to do something.”

“What?”

“I am not obliged to render you an account of my actions.”

“Ah ! one would almost say you were meditating some mischief, where are you going?”

“That’s no business of yours.”

“Oh ! very well then, I shall watch you and follow you.”

I follow him ; he walks towards his companion’s bed, glances at the orange, then leaning up against the window, he calls me to admire some cherries growing on a potted plant. He keeps quite still. Why? Simply because I had told him that I intended to watch him, *otherwise my presence would not have troubled him in the least*. During this time, M. Bernheim had acquainted the other patient with the intended proceeding, he nevertheless having heard the whole transaction. “I do not think he will do it,” said he to the Doctor, “he is one of my mates and he wouldn’t steal from me.”

I walk away and join the group of persons present. I say to M. Beaunis, that this experiment will prove nothing, he answers me by a gesture of surprise. The subject, as soon as he sees me go away and *thinks that I am not watching him any more*, stretches out his hand, seizes the orange that is behind his mate's pillow, *the latter meanwhile looking full at him*. A score for M. Bernheim, but one also for M. Delbœuf ! I should need twenty pages at least of commentary on this experiment. But I shall only allow myself to point out the essential points.

This hypnotised subject then, or to speak more correctly, this man to whom a thought has been suggested, after I had warned him that I was watching him, and from whom I never took my eye, goes with the unerringness, so to speak, "of the falling stone," to carry out the suggested action, not however without a certain distrust of me, and this only, because he had been forewarned. And moreover in his dim consciousness, it is I alone, whom he is watching in that clumsy fashion, in order to seize upon some momentary forgetfulness on my part. He has never noticed at all, that his mate is intently watching him and following his every movement with open eyes ; so he steals the orange from under his very nose ! Let us not forget that it was M. Bernheim the house physician, who suggested to him to take the orange. But M. Frédéricq himself would equally well have fulfilled that command, even preceded as it was by the little homily, recorded above. Why should he have obliged M. Bernheim ? But indeed, the logic of my opponents is very weak. If, say they, a somnambulist resists criminal suggestion, it is because he is not a susceptible subject, or, that the experiment has been ill conducted, or, that the suggestion has not been strong enough. At that rate, it is useless to continue experimenting, if failure is always to be explained away. On my side, I might with equal reason, argue, that they had been dealing with some licentious mind, as yet all unknowing its inner self, or with a born criminal or a latent thief ; and though I object to this kind of argument, it would often prove to be more legitimate reasoning than theirs. Who among us is absolutely virtuous ? How many actions which the law calls criminal have we committed, or might we com-



mit, under the pressure of circumstances, without a shadow of remorse? But let us further examine this experiment.

Our subject then put the orange in his trousers' pocket which stuck out very noticeably. This man might be a criminal, but he was not a dissembler. Looking him straight in the face I said: "What have you been doing?"

"Nothing, I have just done my errand."

"You have stolen!"

"What nonsense!"

"What have you got in your pocket?"

"Nothing" (notice the absurdity of this reply).

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing!"

"What do you call that?"

"Why! it's an orange! it's a very fine orange! *Ma foi!* I can't imagine how it came there!"

M. Bernheim intervenes: "You took it from a fellow-patient, from a comrade! That was very wrong."

"Yes, that's so, but I wanted it. Look! did you ever see such a fine orange? I took a fancy to it and I determined to have it. Besides, *he hadn't seen it* (!) It's not stealing when it isn't missed."

Then I asked: "What is that you said?"

"Why, yes, it is not stealing to take what nobody misses," answers he, with a scarce perceptible cunning and significant wink.

A few minutes later, after we had ceased noticing him, he came up to M. Frédéricq of his own accord laughingly told him that he was in the habit of abstracting tobacco from his companions on this same ground, that if they never missed it, it was not stealing. "It is all in fun, you know!"

I conclude therefore, that this subject had in him latent tendencies to theft, or if you prefer it, to pilfering. And dare any of us, honestly confess to himself that we have not, deep down in ourselves, the germs of any such vices? Who among the most upright of us, does not consider himself perfectly entitled to defraud the government, or to get the better of a Railway Company, or quietly to appropriate an object which he may casually find?

M. Liégeois will very likely say to me: "We will grant that this experiment has not fulfilled the desired requirements; the subject has not very high moral qualities, and he juggled a little. But here now, are some experiments absolutely unimpeachable." Thereupon M. Liégeois relates the histories of Miss E . . . , of N . . . , of Mme. G . . . , and of Mme. C . . . Here are the facts as collated by him in the Gouffe trial.

*First narrative.* M. Liégeois believed that he had produced in Miss E . . . such absolute automatism, so complete an annihilation of moral sense and of all liberty of action, that he caused her, without moving a muscle, to place the muzzle of a revolver close to her mother and fire upon her. The youthful criminal appeared completely awake and far calmer than were the witnesses of this scene. (Take notice of this.) Her mother, immediately reproaching her and telling her that she might have killed her, Miss E . . . answers smiling, with a great deal of common sense: "I have not killed you, since you are speaking to me now."—"Is any one likely to believe that this is merely pretence and acting," adds M. Liégeois, "that a daughter will amuse herself by firing at her mother with a revolver, *which she does not know is not loaded*, simply to deceive the public?"

Well, shall I say it? The hypothesis of simulation, the simulation which is practised in the hypnotic state appears to me to be the only plausible explanation. The calm, smiling attitude of Miss E . . . is an unanswerable proof of this. I have no doubt that if in a dream she had seen herself firing at her mother, she would have suffered as in a terrible night-mare.

Lately, it was in the beginning of January, I dreamed I was present at a sale of paintings. Among others exposed for sale, there was a long picture, nineteen or twenty feet high and less than three feet wide, representing the assumption of some saint. Hardly had the auctioneer mentioned the price, 6,000 francs, than I made a sign of assent. It is knocked down to me. I start for home with my purchase, but on the way I am seized with remorse. Where shall I hang the religious picture? And even if I find a place for it on the staircase what will it look like in my house, with its old black frame and its extraordinary dimensions? And what a price to have

paid, at such a moment when the house bills are pouring in ! In the midst of these reflections, I woke up, my heart was beating tumultuously and during the remainder of the night I continued under the most disagreeable impressions. In spite of my knowing that I was awake and reasoning with myself, congratulating myself that it was nothing but a dream, the enormity of my absurd action weighed upon my mind and I kept continually dreading the reproaches of my family, when they should learn the stupid bargain I had made. How widely different is this mental distress from the placid, smiling condition of Miss E . . . and how naturally one is brought to suppose that during the hypnotic state the subject is not even under the sway of the ordinary illusions of dreamland.

M. Liégeois affirms that Miss E . . . *was not aware that the pistol was not loaded.* I do not believe it. Upon what grounds are we to infer that a somnambulist is an imbecile ? You and I, and everybody would easily surmise that M. Liégeois's revolver was not loaded ! Then why should not Miss E . . . surmise the same ? Is it not for the very reason that he handed it to her, to fire at her mother, that she would opine as much ? Might she not have gathered this from the attitude of the spectators, full of expectancy unmixed by any apprehension ? and might she not have wished to astonish them by her docility and *sang-froid* ? All sorts of suppositions are both rational and possible. Besides all this, somnambulists who are absorbed in the work in hand, generally speaking, show a quicker and surer perspicuity ; their sensibilities are finer, their quickness, their memory, overstep the ordinary limits as exhibited in their normal state. Do we not hear of scholars, who in the hypnotic sleep, learn their lessons in a very short time and write their essays admirably ? I have recorded in the *Revue Philosophique*, August, 1886, some facts about a subject, upon whom I experimented before one of my classes.

"The experiment I am about to give an account of might serve very well as the explanation of many a miracle. B.\* is in the hypnotic sleep. We wish to give him some peculiar order, which he shall execute, after he is awake, at a special signal. The signal is to be a knock given by me on the desk ; the action, to carry a

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\* A lad of about 15, very bright. Has been one of Donato's subjects. Very susceptible and having been hypnotised in a great many public séances.

glass of water (a carafe of water and glass being on a chair) to the student Eucher. He does not know any of the fifteen students present, nor has he yet heard their names. The pupils take their places, without any special order, some standing, some sitting. B. is awakened. We chat a little. I give the signal. B. rises, fills a glass, and *without the slightest sign of hesitation*, carries it to the student mentioned before, who was sitting on one of the back benches, beside a fellow student. We looked at each other with stupefaction. The intention of the experiment had been, to see how he would obey an obscure command. There were in my audience, certain persons, with leanings toward belief in second-sight. This result seemed to overthrow all my convictions. I again throw him into the sleep, and I command him to carry a glass of water to the student Gérard; we are all standing, awaiting with impatient curiosity what will take place. B. fills the glass and this time sends a questioning look over all the spectators, presents the glass first to one, then to another, and finally I had to point out the student Gérard, to whom he brought the water and made him drink it. I again put him to sleep, and asked him to whom he carried the first glass of water. To M. Eucher—Did you know him? No—How did you recognise him?—By his attitude, he looked as if he wanted to hide away."

And this is how the mystery was solved. We had unconsciously prepared the scene, and it was this preparation which betrayed us. But it is none the less a remarkable example of the perspicuity shown by somnambulists. This goes to prove that hypnosis, instead of dulling the understanding, sharpens it.

The second of M. Liégeois's experiments appears to me quite as open to suspicion, and exactly for the same reasons.

"I offered N. a white powder, of the nature of which he is ignorant; I said to him: 'Pay great attention to what I am about to tell you. This paper contains arsenic. You will go presently to such a street to your Aunt's Mme. M. *who is here now*. You will take a glass of water, carefully dissolve the arsenic in it and then you will offer it to your Aunt.' 'Yes Sir'—That evening I received the following note from Mme. M.: 'Mme. M. begs leave to inform M. Liégeois that the experiment succeeded perfectly. Her nephew offered her the poison.' The criminal remembered nothing about it, and it was very difficult to persuade him that he had indeed wished to poison an Aunt for whom he had a deep affection. The automatism had been complete."

I cannot help seeing here an erroneous line of reasoning. They conclude, from the absence of all remembrance, that the somnambulist is an automaton, and from this they go on to deduce that he swallows everything that is said to him. But, since he listens to the voice of his hypnotiser; since he knows that to accomplish the behest, he must do things that have not been expressly pointed out,

though they are understood in the execution of the deed :—such as to get the water from a well or pump—why do they not allow that he is able also to reflect upon the nature of the deed which he is told to do? Why is it that N . . . , who is aware that he is being used in an experiment, cannot say to himself during his hypnotic state, that this is only an experiment, that the paper does not contain arsenic, that M. Liégeois never would really want him to poison his aunt, *his aunt who is present at the time, and who hears every word?*

I repeat again, a hypnotic subject is not an idiot—quite the reverse. All the precaution which M. Liégeois takes to render the experiments reliable, and conclusive, turns against the proof desired. Can you imagine the poisoner, Dr. Castaing, saying to his servant before Hypolite Ballet, whom he intended to kill, “Here is some poisoned wine, you will presently give it to the sick man, whom you see over there in that bed.” If he had done this, he would not have been condemned to lose his head, but they would simply have shut him up in a lunatic asylum. And, as far as that goes, the servant might easily, without any suspicion being attached to the action, have given the poison to Hypolite Ballet, and the latter have drunk it.

But we have dallied long enough over these absurd suppositions. Let us pass on now to the third narrative :

M. Liégeois caused Mme. G . . . to fire at M. P . . . , an ex-magistrate. In order to show clearly that the revolver was loaded, M. Liégeois fired a shot in the garden and came in, showing a piece of card-board, through which the ball had passed. “With absolute unconsciousness and perfect docility Mme. G . . . advances to M. P . . . and fires. Being questioned on the spot by the Chief Magistrate (who was present at the *séance*) she avows the crime with entire indifference. She has killed M. P . . . *because he was not pleasing to her* (!) They can arrest her ; she knows quite well what awaits her. If they take away her life, she will pass into the other world like her victim, whom she sees stretched out, and bathed in his own blood. They ask her whether it was not I who suggested to her the idea of the murder. She denies it, and says she did it spontaneously ; that she alone is guilty ; she is resigned to her fate, she will accept without complaint the consequences of her deed.”

The more I meditate to-day upon these experiments, the less they appear to me to prove what it is desired they should. This perfect tranquillity of Mme. G. . . , her generosity in not inculpating M. Liégeois ; her resignation to the fate that awaits her, establish entirely the fact that she is present in mind and knowledge of events ; and just because of this very attitude, that she possesses her full presence of mind. She never dreamed for an instant that she would really kill M. P . . . . She plays her part conscientiously, she faithfully recites a lesson which she has learned by heart and with which she intermingles side play of her own, childish tricks, as for instance, saying that *her victim had displeased her*. Let us recall to mind the patient who stole an orange, *because it was a fine one*. That Mme. G . . . sees M. P . . . bathed in his own blood, is more than doubtful. I can produce numberless proofs of facts that go to prove that fictitious somnambulists are not dupes of the illusions suggested to them ; their calmness proves this. That it is possible to make them commit an action dangerous to themselves or to others, I am not prepared to deny. I will explain myself later upon this point. But from this state, to that of criminal participation, there is an incalculable distance.

That the somnambulist repeats a lesson that he has learned, is shown forth by M. Liégeois's fourth narrative.

"Mme. C . . . was to give some arsenic in a liquid to M. D . . . who was thirsty. But M. D . . . asked a question that I had not foreseen ; he asked what was in the glass. With a frankness that precluded all idea of simulation Mme. C . . . answered 'Arsenic.'

"I was then obliged to amend my suggestion, and I said : 'If you are asked what is in the glass, say it is sweetened water.'

"Mme. C . . . answered the question the second time, 'Sweetened water.'

"Very courageously M. D . . . swallowed the supposed poison. Questioned by the Chief Magistrate Mme. C. remembers nothing ; she had seen nothing, done nothing, given no drink to any one. She does not know what they are talking about."

Again all this is proof to me, that Mme. C. feels that she is being told to perform an innocent action. It would have been interesting to have awakened her in the middle of the act, to see whether she would have remembered her thoughts, just at the moment when she was giving the drink to M. D . . . I am not sure but that she would

have answered like Miss E . . . that she had no doubt the poison was imaginary, and the scene prearranged.

We have seen M. D . . . ask an unforeseen question, which upset the carrying out of the crime. We have witnessed M. Bernheim's patient steal an orange under the nose of its proprietor, who was looking at him. Admitting, therefore, that all had been foreseen, that M. Liégeois had warned Mme. C . . . of all the possible questions that might be put to her ; that M. Bernheim had strongly recommended his subject to commit his theft secretly, and that every possible detail had been perfectly carried out—should we have even then a faithful transcript of a crime? Can we have the unerring certitude from these occurrences, that a subject in the hypnotic sleep, a bona fide somnambulist will allow himself to be used as an accomplice by a veritable criminal?

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In the preceding paragraphs, I carefully analysed the slightest details invalidating experiments, in which the hypnotic subject acts the part of a criminal, in a fictitious crime. I was able to show, that in all these tests, there had been certain suspicious traits suggesting doubt as to the complete illusion of the actor therein, and I finally added: Supposing that everything had worked smoothly, i. e. that everything had been foreseen and that the subject had not been tripped up anywhere, are we authorised in maintaining that a subject thus far unimpeachable as regards a fictitious crime, would accomplish this same deed in reality? I answer, No.

In order to justify this denial, it will be necessary for us to enter into the Psychology of Hypnosis.

A person in the hypnotic sleep, as well as in the natural sleep, is not so absolutely withdrawn from the real world about him as is generally supposed. The hypnotic subject even less so, than the sleeper, for the former remains in intelligent communication with his magnetiser. If the latter tells him to take a book from a table upon which is an inkstand, some boxes, a statuette, he will pick up the book and not any of the other objects. If he is enjoined to walk straight before him in a room encumbered with chairs he will

manage to avoid them, and even if the illusion is pushed further he may knock up against them, but the action will be done quite cautiously. And this is why, in public séances, he never hurts himself, in spite of the wildness and apparent excitement of his movements. This is also the reason, that in experiments intended to demonstrate this absolute automatism, the preparation for the proposed crime, the attitude of the spectators, while the subject is carrying out his part, the integrity of the person who is suggesting the action, the calmness of the intended victim ; all these things, render the suggestion less illusive than even an ordinary dream would be.

M. Liégeois asks this question at the conclusion of his first narrative: "Where is the spectator, who could believe that this scene was only a melodrama with clever acting ; and that a daughter for her amusement, and solely to deceive an audience, would fire an unloaded revolver at her mother?" To this I answer : And why should she not play her part in this melodrama, when she sees M. Liégeois devise it, her mother lend her co-operation, and the audience watch it with curiosity and interest?

Here again we find the same fallacy in the argument : Because a subject does not reveal what is going on within himself, and only puts into visible speech what is suggested to him, it is taken for granted that he is going through a mental process identical with that of his magnetiser. But allow me to ask in my turn : Will it be easily credited, that a daughter, would, deliberately and without a trace of feeling, shoot at her mother, unless, she fully believed the action would have no serious consequences, and that the person who had suggested this impious deed, was only requiring her to act a part ?

Hypnotic subjects do not take long to realise that they are being used as tests in experiments. Some are always gracious in responding to them, many end by refusing to lend themselves to be used in such fashion, especially in public séances. All these details go far to prove that in hypnosis, the subjects retain, at least a partial independence.

If a sleeper, who dreamed he was murdering his mother, should behold her terrified, beseeching, invoking the pity of her son, calling for help to the horrified spectators, he would feel that he was in-



duced to commit this deed by some sort of motive, which, absurd or unlikely though it might be, would still be the controlling power; in a word, the dream would be in reality a kind of incoherent and unreal drama, though composed of very real elements, in which horror would play a very present part. But if he should see his ostensible victim smiling and conversing with him amidst a company animated only by a sentiment of curiosity, he might well suspect, even in his sleep, that what he sees and what he is doing, is a pure delusion. And this is exactly what he would say to himself, should it come into his head to fire upon a *magistrate*, and for the reason *that his looks displeased him*.

These prearranged scenes fail in verisimilitude and no more deceive the actors in them, than they do the spectators or the author.

To this you may object : But, if the pistol had been loaded, Miss E. would have shot her mother! This rests upon the supposition that the mother and the spectators, still believed it to be unloaded, otherwise, their terror alone, would have been quite sufficient to call back the subject to the reality. And even with this assumption, this murder-test would have borne a greater resemblance to a simple homicide from imprudence. By this I mean to say, that so far as the spectators, the victim, and the assassin were concerned, the act would not have been changed in its character, simply because the magnetiser, had by mistake, given a loaded instead of an unloaded pistol to the subject. I need hardly remark that a real crime would never be perpetrated in this manner.

Thoroughly convinced though I was, of the impossibility of making experiments that would entirely fathom this question, circumstances nevertheless, allowed me once more to make a test which is well adapted to show that it is not as easy as some may think, to transform an hypnotic subject into a murderous automaton.

J. . . . is that excellent somnambulist to whom my experiments have given a certain notoriety. It is she together with her sister, whom I made use of in my studies on "Memory in Hypnosis," on "Imitation," and "Hypnotic Consciousness." She it is, who three several times allowed herself to be experimented upon by blistering on corresponding parts of the body ; and notably in one case where

in accordance with suggestion no inflammation took place.\* She is tall, robust, intelligent, industrious, healthy. She is now married and has had a child. The *accouchement* took place in the hypnotic sleep. The case being in the hands of M. Fraipont, Professor of Obstetrics in the University of Liège; and never was the power of hypnotism more remarkably exhibited.† In the case of this patient there remained no trace of remembrance whatever, after awakening.

I have gone into these details merely to show the reader that no better subject could have been found for my purpose. I have in another place (see *Revue Philosophique*, article on "Hypnotic Consciousness") pointed out certain traits in her case, which at my *début*, were strongly calculated to make me a believer in the absolute servility of the hypnotic subject; traits which I shall subsequently recall to your attention and comment upon.

To judge more fairly of the value of the experiment, I must further state, that J. is both resolute and courageous. During several summers she remained in the country in the environs of Seraing in attendance upon my wife who was in ill-health, and in whose room she slept. After the summer vacation it often happened that she spent the whole night alone with her. At the head of the bed hung a six-barrelled revolver, loaded; a precaution that we had taken on account of the well-known strikes which took place in 1886, amongst the workmen of the numerous factories in our neighborhood.

In the summer of 1887 I happened to be absent. A man came one night, prowling round the garden and fumbling at the lock of the door, which he even tried to force. The barking of the dogs wakened J., she opened the window, perceived the man, took the revolver and went down into the hall watching for the moment in which to fire at the nocturnal visitor. The man hearing the noise slipped away with celerity. And the same year that this occurrence took place, J. slept on the first floor with her loaded revolver hanging on a nail beside her bed.

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\* See my pamphlet on *The Origin of Curative Effects in Hypnotism*.

† See *Revue de L'Hypnotisme*. April, 1891.

The 24th Feb. 1888, without communicating my intentions to anybody except to my daughter, and that only at the very moment of beginning the experiment, I discharged the revolver. It was six o'clock in the evening. A young lady, (herself an hypnotic subject,) and my daughter, were seated at a table, cutting out articles from a newspaper, which they afterwards tied up in bundles. I called J. and at the moment she opened the door, I hypnotised her by a motion. I said to her in an agitated tone—"Here are some thieves, who are carrying off papers."—J. came quickly forward and turning towards me said: "No sir, they are playing with them—Why sure enough they are taking them." Then she walked resolutely up to them and tore the papers out of their hands, put them on the table in front of her and in an imperious tone said: "Don't you touch them any more."

I—"You are never going to let those knaves remain in the house—run and fetch the revolver" (it was in the adjoining room). J. ran without hesitation. She returned holding the weapon in her hand and stood on the threshold. "Fire," cried I.

"Sir, we must not kill them."

"Thieves? Why certainly!"

"No sir! I will not kill them."

"You must."

"I won't do it." And she walked backwards still holding the revolver, I following her and energetically reiterating my command. "I won't. I won't do it. I will not murder." She then placed the revolver on the floor but *cautiously*. She continued to go backwards, I, meanwhile insisting and following her. "I will not do it."—Having come to a dead stand in the corner of the room, she repulsed me violently and I thought it prudent to awaken her, upon which she came to herself smiling in her usual pleasant manner. She remembered, however, nothing whatever, although at the sight of the revolver lying on the floor, she seemed to have a kind of vague recollection. She did not seem at all discomposed in manner. If this scene had taken place in a dream, she would certainly have exhibited more excitement.

This is what we may term conclusive evidence, that is to say if

ever negative evidence can be called so. Let us comment now upon these facts.

It will be noticed that J. is not the dupe of the hallucination to which she has been subjected. She does not take either of the young ladies for thieves, nor the newspapers for valuable papers. Her first answer is very significant—"No sir, they are playing with them." Besides which her expression, her attitude, the manner in which she looked at the two reputed thieves, and tore the newspapers out of their hands, had something so keenly observant, so prepared, so theatrical, that both my witnesses and myself could not possibly believe her actions ingenuous. I have often questioned her about the illusions that I suggested to her. I asked her for example, if, when I appeared to her under another aspect, for instance under the appearance of a young man, with clustering locks and a black beard, she ever perceived anything of my real resemblance. She invariably answered, that she saw my actual person, as it were in a cloud, behind the figure which I had called up before her mental vision. It is very probable that she recognised my daughter and her friend in the persons whom I pointed out as the robbers. I might have assured myself of this by causing her to recall her thoughts at the time. I am aware that the opponents of this opinion challenge, and not unreasonably, tests made in this manner because they have doubts about the suggestion.

If then the facts were such as are related, J. was playing a rôle not perhaps strictly in accordance with the rules of ordinary acting, knowing that she was reciting a part, but feeling nevertheless that she had a certain part to play and must enter into the spirit of it.

It is incontrovertible that the hypnotic subject really does play his part in precisely this fashion. When, for example, you extend his arm and defy him to put it down he seems to make an effort to lower it, but in reality he does not bring the required muscles into play at all. If you bid him keep his hand open, he never dreams of using the flexor muscles. Again, if the spectators try to change the position of either hand or arm, they meet with energetic resistance.

You will ask me how it was that J. did not carry out her acting all through? Why, after she had gone for the revolver with such deliberation, she did not fire it? It was because, the action being so rapid in its development, she had no time for reflection; she must have thought and she actually did believe, that the revolver was loaded as it always was. This is proved by the precaution with which she handled it and put it on the floor. It is evident that she thought it was a dangerous game. If I had known how the affair would terminate, I would have taken the pistol and told her that I would fire myself, in order to see what her thought and action would have been. But notwithstanding all this, supposing she had fired could we have concluded from this, that she really had latent murderous tendencies? We could not have drawn any legitimate conclusions even yet. For if, as we have just stated J. was not entirely withdrawn from her actual surroundings, she might naturally suppose that I was only joking, and that I should never make her fire on my own child, and on this account she need not feel any anxiety in fulfilling the order that I had given her.

The problem is a serious one. It is also a psychological problem. I have already partially disclosed the solution which I myself am led to give to it, and I can best translate my thoughts by these words and in the following formula: Persons in hypnosis will only execute acts similar to those they would naturally perform in dreams. I have asked a number of persons, among others, those connected with the law; whether they had ever dreamt they committed murders or robberies, and up to the present time all have answered in the negative. And yet, lawyers interrogate criminals, and it would be quite within the realm of possibility through one of those duplications of personality which I pointed out in my work on "*Sleep and Dreams*,"\* that they should take up for an instant the rôle of an assassin. This is not an impossible supposition. Does it ever happen that the novelist or the actor, in portraying or impersonating an infamous character, the creation of his imagination, does so identify himself for the nonce, with his own invention, that even in sleep,

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\* *Sleep and Dreams*, p. 24 et seqq. (Paris: Félix Alcan).

for a brief space, he incorporates himself, so to speak, into the fictitious personage he has evoked. There are some very curious investigations to make on this subject. But even if any positive facts could be gathered from this, we should still be left in doubt, as to whether by post-hypnotic suggestion the subject would continue to carry out the same rôle.

Doubtless, an anatomist may dream that he is dissecting a body, but could we produce an hypnotic condition such as to make him use the knife as freely upon a living body? Can I make a butcher believe that a child is a sheep? I consider the thing to be perfectly feasible, yet my thesis is not at all weakened by this concession. We will take it for granted that, animated by evil designs you proceed to hypnotise beforehand, the anatomist and the butcher, and then bring them at a given moment to the victim! And let us further imagine that the combination succeeds perfectly. How will you manage to veil in deepest secrecy all your previous manœuvres and cast a semblance of likelihood over the culpability of your accomplices?

Will not the old adage, *Cui bono*, be quoted against you? In order to insure perfect impunity, you would have to overcome such an accumulation of material *impedimenta*, the lightest of which would suffice to dissipate all apprehensions in the minds of those in whom chimerical fears have not entirely obliterated their common sense. It is therefore evident that in so far as we know now, from experiments intended to test this theory and these possibilities of Criminal Suggestion, no positive results can be obtained. These criminal actions, so appositely named—Laboratory Crimes—bear no resemblance to actual ones.

If this debate is ever to be closed it can only be before a Criminal Court when a Troppman, a Pranzini, or an Eyraud, shall have been the operator, and it shall have been clearly shown, what interest the assassin had in making use of a so-called, unconscious and automatic accomplice. Then only, shall we be able to appreciate to what degree hypnotism may become a dangerous enemy to society at large. And even then, we shall have to remind

ourselves that all our medicines are poisons and that they have the power of destroying even more surely, than that of healing.

Thus the problem is still unsolved.

Here is a story told me by Dr. Liébault. He, or perhaps it was M. Bernheim, or both together, hypnotised a workman and told him to steal a couple of little plaster figures, that were used as ornaments on the mantel-piece in a house where he was working. He did so. The affair had been forgotten for some time because the suggestion had not been carried out on the spot. About three months after the occurrence, this same workman was arrested for stealing a pair of trousers from the front of a shop. Upon which the previous hypnotic suggestion was remembered.

My opinion is that the workman—and how many there are of the same calibre—had a very slight regard for *meum and tuum*. This reminds us of that hospital patient, whom we saw pilfering the tobacco from his comrades, and I do not think it was at all necessary to have thrown the workman into the hypnotic sleep in order to make him steal the statuettes. But from another point of view, this experiment, which did not prove anything, might give rise to party arguments from those who deem it desirable to maintain that it was the initiatory suggestion that first gave this man the taste for stealing.

To sum up in a few words this portion of my investigation ; the result of my experiments and of my analyses is this : that the experiments of my opponents prove nothing.

For the present I shall confine myself to this purely negative conclusion.

But there are other grounds besides experiments on which we may examine this question. We can do so by careful observation and minute analysis of the actions of hypnotised persons.

I have said before that the degree of morality observable in the dreams of the subject, gives the measure of what may be expected from him during hypnosis.

According to my opinion, hypnotism is less powerful in inciting to actions of grave moral import, than the corrupting influence of word or example, the love of gold, or the excitement of the passions.

All truly scientific experiments have brought into prominence the analogy between physiological and incited dreams, and to-day we may say that this is the doctrine of the future. Thus if an hypnotic subject admits without opposition that he is made of sugar, or of glass, that he feels he is melting in the rain, or being broken to atoms by the awkwardness of the bystanders ; if he thinks he is a lamp, or allows himself to be trundled along like a wheelbarrow ; if such a subject, I repeat, refuses to steal a purse, or to receive an embrace, the conclusion forces itself upon one that the hypnotic subject has more power over himself than some persons would wish us to believe ; in spite of his docility, there are some things he absolutely refuses to do.

If then, reasoning by analogy has ever been legitimate, it is surely so in this case, when the inference can be drawn that the man who refuses to give a blow will refuse to use a knife ; and that the woman who refuses to give a token of affection will certainly refuse to allow of serious tampering with morals.

Let us then pay close attention to what observation may teach us.

I shall hope to be able to demonstrate by actual facts, that persons in an hypnotic condition, preserve at least a sufficient portion of their intelligence, their reason, together with freedom of action, to prevent them from committing deeds that neither their conscience nor their habits approve of.

J. DELBŒUF.